

Interview H0064: with Lobsang Palden [tib. blo bzang dpal ldan], (India, 1993) : Part No. 1 of 1

Lobsang Palden was a Khamba from Litang. He talks about the how the Chinese came to Litang and how relations deteriorated leading to the uprising in 1956 and the siege of Litang monastery. He also discusses how he was chosen by Gombo Tashi in 1956 along with 22 other young Khambas, including Litang Athar, to go to Kalimpong to seek military assistance. He also explains how he went as the informal bodyguard of the Dalai Lama when he went to India and he discusses, in detail, about how he was sent by Gyadotsang and Jenkhentsisum from Kalimpong to Lhasa, to deliver a secret letter to Andrutsang Gombo Tashi about starting a disturbance in Lhasa in 1957 to prevent the Dalai Lama from returning to Lhasa from India.

Q

How old are you?

A

I am 72 years old.

Q

You were born in Litang, right?

A

Yes, I was born in the marketplace located near the monastery.

Q

In the years 1948-49-50, the Chinese Communist won the victory in 1949 from Chang Kaishek, right?

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A

Yes.

Q

When they [Communist] came to Litang, did they make war with the Guomindang? Did they say that they are going to liberate that place or what did they say?

A

At the beginning, when the war took place it was said that Mao Zedong was with them and they came like bandits. They came up from China after China split into two groups and they were like bandits. They came from China up to Satham [tib. sa tham], Gyelthang [tib. rgyal thang] Mili [tib. smi li], [Dartsedo](#) [tib. dar rtse mdo] and Minyag [tib. mi nyag]. A group among them also implied that they are going to Lhasa. When they went up talking like this, they came to Litang.

Before the Chinese came to Litang, Litang Monastery was kind of the owner of Litang both on political and religious affairs. The monastery said, "The so called Communist Chinese are very bad so we have to oppose them." They [Khambas] opposed and fought with the Chinese in the places called Magandrong [tib. ?], Minya Ranga Kha [tib. mi nyag ra nga ? kha], Uthog Sumpo [tib. dbu thog sum po ?] for about a month and they [Khambas] set up their regiment there. But, the Khambas were unable to cope with them because the Chinese were coming from everywhere like Chantreng [tib. cha 'phreng], Ganzi [tib. dkar mdzes], and Nyarong [tib. nyag rong]. After that, Litang Monastery was lost. It was not really lost, but the all of the soldiers in the monastery fled and went out to the mountains, like to Songrong [in 1956].

At that time, the Chinese had a pleasant demeanor and said, "We are not going to stay here. We just came here for an inspection of this area. We were not the people who make war and rob things." Actually, at that time, they had already seized the Litang Monastery. But they said, "We are leaving. Wherever we go, give us food. And even if you don't give us food, don't fight with us. We won't harm even a single person." At that time, the units [of Khambas] were set up over there [in the mountains], and they [the Chinese] didn't do anything to them. They just took over the monastery completely.

At that time, the Chinese ate and drank whatever they wanted in the monastery. {But} They didn't take away any other things. For their shoes that were torn, they took materials

from thankas and patched them. They stayed for only one week. We thought that they were going to Lhasa, but they didn't go to Lhasa. Then we thought they were going in the direction of Ba [tib. 'ba'], but they didn't go there also. If they would have gone to Ba, they had to go to Chamdo, but they didn't go there. They went through Nyarong and fought a little bit. The people there were kind of unprincipled [tib. ma rabs] and they waited to ambush the Chinese in the forest and killed the Chinese and stole their guns. Most of the youngsters stole all the guns from the Chinese and killed the Chinese who were going in front or at the behind.

All of the Chinese except the wounded who were at point of the death went through Nyarong to Ganzi. Then they went to Jyekundo [tib. skye rgu] and back like this to Siling. At that time, it was said that the Siling Majitsong [Ma Bufang?] killed a lot of Chinese. Later, when the Communist came to Siling the second time, they brought back many trucks full of human bones of the corpses of their soldiers killed in the past in Siling.

The first Communists went back to China. When the latter Communist came up, in the beginning they said nice things. They came up while liberating the places on their way and then they arrived at [Dartsedo](#). From there it takes 5 days to Litang when we travel with horses and mules. If you go up to Ganzi, it also takes 5 days.

When the Chinese came, they didn't talk about the liberation [Note MCG: In Kham they often used the term "liberate" to mean do land reforms]. They said, "We are friends. You should treat us nicely. It is useless to fight. Whenever you fight with us, you can't cope with us." In the beginning, they [Chinese] were trading and they brought many truck full of statues, [gyaling](#), cymbals, drums and many other religious objects from China through Darstedo up to Lhasa. But our people were kind of stupid [tib. klad pa med pa] so we didn't know what they had done in China. After that, they brought coral, turquoise, and jade. They sold jade rings for only 3-4 [dayan](#). Later, they took over all the areas including Litang in a peaceful manner without fighting.

Three years after they took over the Litang monastery, the Chinese leader called something like Zhou Enlai came to Litang and he said, "The monastery shouldn't be the chief [tib. dpon po] of this place like before. If you don't be careful, the Chinese will liberate this place. If it would be liberated, it won't be good at all." When they talked about liberation we said, "We don't know what liberation is. The Litang Monastery was here from the ancient times and it exists now. We had been working like this from the early times and we also work the same now. So we can't accept liberation because we don't know about it.

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If you would liberate us now, the Chinese and the Tibetans would never get along well. We will never accept it [liberation]." Like this, the liberation was delayed for about a year.

After that, the Chinese became more and more powerful and they came to Chamdo and they took over Lhasa and the area up to the Dzaleb [tib. rdza leb] La mountain pass in India. At that time, they transported 500-600-1000 loads of [dayan](#) through Litang. There weren't any people who didn't like the money. Normally, if a yak would cost about 50 [dayan](#), the Chinese paid 500 [dayan](#) and bought yaks.

Q

Did they pay that much?

A

In the beginning, they [Chinese] were deceiving people. They also paid 50 [dayan](#) for a sheep when normally it cost only about 15 [dayan](#). They also said nice things to the people and deceived the people for about 2 years. The Chinese bought about 1,000 yaks and left them in Yönrü [tib. g.yon ru] and the Uthog [tib. dbu thog] areas that belonged to the famous Yönrupön [tib. g.yon ru dpon] and Uthog [tib. dbu thog dpon]. At that time, there wasn't any motorable road beyond Chamdo and they used the yaks for their transportation. At that time, the Chinese were paying money and deceiving people.

After that, the Chinese said that they are going to liberate this place and the monastery shouldn't remain as before. The monastery said, "The Litang Monastery had been holding power from ancient times. At the time of the Guomindang, the Litang Monastery still remained as a monastery like before and the Chinese remained like before. We will not accept liberation at all." So it was delayed for a several months.

One day, they [Chinese] held a meeting and called all the monks in charge of the monastery and said, "It is not alright if we don't do liberation [reforms] because all of the 18 provinces [of China] had been liberated and we are liberating up to the Dzeleb [tib. rdza leb] Mountain Pass in India." The four [chandzö](#) bugba, the [drönyerchemmo](#), the two shengo and the 18 gesang of the monastery still said they won't accept the liberation." There were about 80 better off monks in the monastery.

Then the Chinese fixed a date and said, "If you don't accept the liberation, we will hold a meeting on such and such date. At that time, if you don't have a plan for the liberation, it won't be good at all for the monastery and it won't be easy for you. At that time, you have to make the decision whether or not you are going to accept [the liberation-reforms]." Like

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this, the Chinese talked through a kind of by force. But the monastery still said that we will never accept the liberation. At that time, the people in charge of the monastery were called to the town to where the Chinese offices were located at Shagodrong which was located one mile from the monastery and there they held the above mentioned meeting.

After they [the monks] came back from the meeting, they discussed what should be done and they said, "We should not leave the Litang Monastery like this. They [Chinese] said that they going to do liberation. If they do liberation, then it is finished. Even one person will not be left, so what shall we do?" At that time, Khargya Ngawang Tenzin [tib. mkhar rgya ngag dbang bstan 'dzin] was the [drönyerchemmo](#) and Deyong Atrin [tib. de yong a 'phrin] was a new [chandzö](#) bugba. Those people said, "Even if not even one person is left, we will never accept the liberation." When they discussed what we should do they discussed that when we go to attend the meeting [held by the Chinese], nobody is allowed to go outside. Each person should put a Mauser pistol in our dresses' pouches. The Chinese will use force. We have to make up our mind and fight with the Chinese. Even if the monastery and the whole area would be destroyed, there is nothing to be shocked about because it will have been destroyed for religion. We will never yield under liberation." All of them agreed to that and they made this resolution and went to attend the meeting.

I was not there, but I heard from the scholar monks that after few days when they went to attend the meeting, the Chinese had changed their attitude and they showed a different attitude on that day and they showed a frightening demeanor. Some of them [the monks] watched outside and saw that the soldiers had surrounded the meeting place and they were holding guns and they had planned to arrest all of them [Khambas]. Then the Chinese told them, "We are going to do liberation so are you going to accept it or not? Then Deyong Atrin said, "We will not accept liberation even if the enemy of Buddhism would come and if the Litang Monastery were to be destroyed. If we are allowed to pay the taxes and work and stay in one's own land we will stay clearly [separated]. The Chinese are Chinese and the Tibetans are Tibetan and we won't accept the liberation." He asked the people attending the meeting, "Are you going to accept liberation?" Then all of them said, "We are not going to accept liberation. What do we have to do?"

Then Khargya Ngawang Tenzin banged the Chinese table with his fist and took out his Mauser pistol and said, "We will not accept liberation, even if not one person is left." Then the Chinese leader said, "No, no. You don't need to do that. We can talk slowly and calm [the situation] down." Then they [Khambas] said, "Let's go out" and about 10 people in

groups left the meeting place. The Chinese were unable to arrest even a single person though they had planned to arrest them by using force.

After the [Khambas] came back to the monastery, they discussed about making war. There is nothing to do even if not one person is left. We also should call the representative of the many political entities [tib. mnga' sde] of Ngari Shinkhang, the whole area of Litang. If we don't make up our minds, it would not be all right. Then they held a meeting and decided to recruit fighters from the age of 18-60 and recruited the fighters from everywhere. They had weapons in the monastery and all of the bigger households had about 3-4 guns and even the small households had one gun. The monastery was doing religion activities, but they also had weapons.

After recruiting the fighters, they discussed what to do. Yönrupön and Uthogpön were the chiefs (tib. [pön](#)) of the nomads. The son of the famous Yönrupön was called Sonam Gyatso [tib. bsod nams rgya mtsho]. He came with 30-40 riders to attend the meeting in the monastery when he heard that they were going to make war. Yönrupön said at the meeting, "We should fight with the Chinese and settle the matter. Otherwise, we can't settle the matter through talking. The Chinese had eliminated the 18 provinces. So we can't handle them by fighting, but we should fight even if one person is not left [alive]. There is nothing to be amazed about this." At that time, there were many nomad [pön](#) like Uthogpön and Drongpa Nangopön [tib. 'brong pa nang sgo ? dpon]. They decided to make war.

Then Yönrupön went back home once and when he came back to the monastery, in the places like the Tsaka [tib. tshwa kha] Hermitage in Tsachukha [tib. tshwa [chu](#) kha] and Dodunglha [tib. ?], the Chinese had dug trenches on the plains and made all their soldiers lay down in the trenches. They planned to kill Yönrupön and his servants when he would come over. When Yönrupön arrived on the plain, the Chinese shot one of his servants. At that time, Yönrupön was protected by his protective talisman and he charged forward to the bunkers and shot the Chinese in the trench and killed all of the Chinese. Then they came back directly. He had about 14-15 servants with him and he came back to Litang Monastery.

At that time, the Litang Monastery also had prepared [for war] and they fought many times. During 15-16 days, the Chinese were still coming up and the Khambas couldn't cope with them because they had over tens of thousands of soldiers coming from everywhere like from Nyagrang, Chantreng, Satham and Gyelthang and they surrounded the Litang Monastery like a ring. Then they also started the bombarding it and they even

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bombed a place near the monastery. I heard that the shrines in the monastery fell down [due to this]. They bombed like this for 2 days and they [Khambas] killed numerous Chinese and several Khambas were also killed.

Then they [Khambas] said, "It won't be alright if we don't leave. We shouldn't be bullheaded and remain here. There is nothing to be amazed about for us to be killed, but [if we stay] the Litang Monastery will be bombed and destroyed. We should leave and let them kill as many as they want." At that point, the young heroes came out like Deyong Atrin, Khargya Ngawang Tenzin and Tayang Phüntso Thöndub [tib. phun tshogs don grub]. Those heroes were like Gyatsa [tib. rgya tsha] in the Gesar Story.

They made up their minds to get out from the monastery and they discussed how they should leave because the monastery was surrounded by tens of thousands of Chinese soldiers in several circles like an inner and middle and outer circle. Then they said that some of us would die, but some of us will get out. We shouldn't remain like this. We should make up our minds.

Yönrupön and Dagodrigo [tib. mda' rgod gri go?] were related to each other and they said, "The Two of us brothers took an oath when we entered the monastery saying that we will never leave the monastery unless we would die. You people should go out, but the two of us are not going out." The other ministers [tib. blon po] under the [pön](#) told them, "Pön! What are you talking about? If we don't get out we will die. There is nothing to be amazed about going out. This is possible. In any case, we should get out." The two of them said, "When we entered the monastery and dismounted our horses near the gate, the two of us took the oath. So we are not going to do anything against the oath that we made to die [rather than leave]. All of you should go out tomorrow. Not even a single person needs to stay here."

Then they made the decision that one group would leave from the Eastern Gate [tib. shar sgo sgo chen] and one group will leave from the gate facing the village. Another group will leave from the lower part of the monastery where there was a stupa. Then they said to let people die and leave their corpses there but take their weapons. If we don't leave, the monastery will be bombed and get eliminated.

At dawn people left the monastery at once from 4 different directions. At that time, I was not in the monastery. The Chinese fired guns from all the [surrounding] mountains and then they [Khambas] charged forward towards the Chinese bunkers and killed the Chinese and the whole place was filled with corpses. Monks and laymen and numerous horses were also killed and place was filled with horse corpses. At that time, they got out riding

horses and many people were killed. After that, the Chinese arrested all the people in the marketplace and the village and drove them into the monastery where there were some people who hadn't dare to run away.

At that time, the highest military officer of the People's Liberation Army was nicknamed webbed finger or Jalagjan [tib. bya [lag](#) can], because he had webbed fingers. There were 8 [khamtsen](#) and 16 [mitsen](#) in Litang Monastery, with Shiwa [tib. zhi ba] Khamtsen being the largest --it half the size of the all the 8 [khamtsen](#). So at that time, the Chinese shut up all the monks and the laymen in Shiwa Khamtsen. There were tens of thousands of people shut in like animals there. At that time, Yönrupön and his brother were staying in a monk's apartment belonged to a monk called Goso from [Sera Mey](#). Then the two of them fired their guns and the Chinese knew that the two of them were there. The Chinese shot at them and told them to surrender. They (Chinese) said, "If you don't surrender you will die." The two of them shot and killed Chinese and all the people were being shut up in Shiwa Khamtsen. The Chinese also didn't let Yönrupön and the other come out.

At that time, the webbed fingered Chinese military officer got agitated and said, "I have made war all over the world, but I had never made a war like this. Tens of thousands of my people are killed. Today, I am going to burn all the people in Shiwa Khamtsen. Then they brought kerosene oil, cooking oil and butter and piled it near the gate of the assembly hall.

The brother of Yönrupön had been wounded by 4 shots. And when Yönrupön heard about that [burning the people in Shiwa khamtsen] he said, "If they burn tens of thousands of people, then it is finished." So then he stood up on the roof of the house and said, "I will surrender. I am Yönrupön. But I am a [pön](#) and will surrender only to a [Chinese] [pön](#). We don't have a custom where a [pön](#) would surrender to a servant. So I will surrender to the Chinese [pön](#). I will not fight and I will surrender." Then the Chinese officers went back and told their highest officer, the webbed fingered one, that Yönrupön said that he is going to surrender to, and told him that he [Yönrupön] said that a [pön](#) will surrender to a [pön](#) and will not surrender to a servant. He is talking nicely, so you need to go there."

Then the highest [Chinese] leader went. At that time, Yönrupön held a Pamaling rifle and a Mauser pistol from the muzzles in his hands and he put another loaded Mauser pistol into his dresses' pouch. Then the Chinese military officer came to the small plain at the front of the Buddha temple in a very imposing manner with 5-6 servants. They mounted machine guns all around that place. Then Yönrupön handed over his rifle and the pistol holding them from the muzzles and said, "It is very good. I am Yönrupön. You are a [pön](#) and I am also a [pön](#). The two of us are working for the people and have come

to this place. You are very good. So I will surrender to you and he pretended to shake hands and then he bend his body and took out his Mauser pistol and shot the Chinese military officer in his chest 6-7 times. When he was attacked from the all the directions, he charged forward to the soldiers holding the machine guns and killed one of them and took the machine gun. At that time, he [Yönrupön] got hit with 14 shots, but he didn't fall down. Then Yönrupön was killed and his wounded brother also died after that. The Chinese military officer was also killed. After that, since there weren't any military officers making the decisions, they [soldiers] let all the people go out. Then the Chinese arrested the people that they needed to arrest who were from the monastery and let the others leave.

After that, the Chinese placed the bodies of Yönrupön and his brother at the head of the village for a week and they told the people, "You should look at this person. If we could arrest this person and if we could have educated him and changed his mind to follow the Communist Party he could have been a person who could take over the whole world. But now he has become like this and has gotten shot so many times. He killed one of the best military officers of the People's Liberation Army and few of his colleagues. This person had such spirit and courage, but we had to kill."

After that, the Litang Monastery was lost to the Chinese and the Chinese sent about 10000-20000 soldiers to fight with about 400 Litang riders and killed them. The [Litang] fighters who were at a distance of 1-2 days came back to the monastery and killed some people [Chinese] and then they ran away again. Like this, the people like Atsa Trinley and Sorong Daga from Do [tib. mdo] and Chantreng also went to the mountains.

After Yönrupön was killed, about 300 people led by Changpapön [tib. byang pa dpon] came up and tens of thousands of People's Liberation Army stopped them near a river called Dzigo and all of them [Khambas] were killed. These were some people came out from Memo Mountain. Among them, Gyadotsang Wangdü [tib. rgya rdo tshang dbang 'dus] was one of them. This was because the people had to flee from Litang Monastery. After that, the traders in Darstedo also came up to Lhasa because they were afraid [of the Chinese]. Then they said that shouldn't stay in Lhasa also. The main leader was Andru Jindag [tib. a 'brug sbyin bdag] and they said that we have to do something because the enemy of the religion has arrived here. They held meetings secretly. I was not among the people attending the meetings, but I heard [about them] from the people of Litang.

They started by offering the golden throne and the Mendre Tensum to the Dalai Lama in [Norbulinga](#). At that time, they said that if they would hold meetings [openly] and rise up

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against the Chinese, the Chinese will be suspicious and we would be unable to rise up. Therefore, they set up the complete regiment of [Chushigandru](#) and went to Drigu.

When the Dalai Lama went to India[in late 1956], at first we didn't know about that. There were 23 of us, all youngsters from Litang. At that time I was young. The leaders were Lhasey Gyalo Thondup, Shakapba and the late Khenjung, and the main leader was [Lukhangwa](#).

At that time, I didn't have any idea about the purpose, but when the Dalai Lama came to India, one day 26-27 of us were called and they told us, "The Dalai Lama is coming and he will go every where in India. At that time, you have to go with him. All of us were given a brown [chupa](#), a yellow raw silk shirt, and velvet boots. We were told that we should go to the mainland India [India outside of Kalimpong-Darjeeing]. At that time, we had the enthusiasm to go, but we didn't know the language. So there was a person called Bagdro [tib. [bag](#) bro] who had done something during the Second World War. He served as a servant for Gyalo Thondup. I met him 6 years ago in Darjeeling. He was our interpreter and guided all of us. All of the expenses came from the [Tibetan] government.

We were told that we should patrol wherever the Dalai Lama is going and watch the situation and work according to the situation. At first, we went to Riwalsar [tib. mtsho pad ma] and stayed there for a week. We were told, "You should do what ever Bagdro tells you to do and you are not allowed to do any reckless things. Even if you don't know the language, you can know the situation." After that, we were sent to Amritsar and we stayed for 3 days in a big Dharamsala and then we were told that the Dalai Lama is going to Delhi and we went to Delhi. At that time, we had to go wherever Bagdro took us. We didn't know how to go in a rickshaw. We always went in horse carts.

Then we were sent to Bodhgaya. At that time, we received an order, "You had been working very nicely. There will be more work for you and you should accomplish it." After that, we came up directly here [Kalimpong] and I was told to go [to Tibet]. I said, "What do I have to go for? I don't know anything and the border is filled with Chinese." At that time, the Chinese were kind of okay. Although the situation was quite tight, they were not using force right away because the Dalai Lama was here. The Chinese were deceiving people. The [kungö](#) told me, "You have to go because you are a better one among these people. You have to go to deliver a letter. You don't need to talk to anybody. You just have to carry the letter. But you have to sacrifice your life. We have 100% trust in you. The letter is on behalf of the general Tibetan people and the Tibetan government." Although I am not a capable person, I said, "You don't have to worry about this."

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Who told you to go?

A

Shakapba, Khenjung and Gyalo Thondup. The three of them called me and told me about this. They said, "If you need a partner, you can take one." At that time, there were no vehicles. They told me that I have to go. They sent Litang Sega Trinley [tib. bsod dga' 'phrin las] as my partner and we had horses and mules. I was told not to tell my partner about the letter since he was just sent to help me. They asked me how am I going to carry the letter. I said, "It is difficult to carry the letter. What shall I do? It won't be alright to carry it along with me [in my clothes]. So I put the letter at the bottom of a yellow snuff-box and filled the box with snuff and I carried it the pouch of my [chupa](#). Though I don't know how to take snuff, I will just go through the motions of taking snuff. I think it will be okay. In case they arrest me, I will sacrifice my life and throw the letter in the water wherever I would be arrested. If I carry it along with me, if I would be arrested, the letter will be revealed. I didn't know the content of the letter. Anyway, they will behead me. It doesn't matter because I have sacrifice my life. If I don't sacrifice my life and behave nervous then everything is finished."

Then they said, "You are really smart. Do as you said." So like this I carried the letter. Then they told me to take a partner, but do not tell him about the letter. Then they gave me money for the expenses and we had a horse and a mule. So then we departed and arrived at Sharsingma [the Chinese check post at the border]. At first I was okay. In the past, I was kind of brave and good looking, but when I got on the bridge of Sharsingma and arrived at the Chinese office I thought, Oh! what is going to happen to me today and I had a kind of frightening feeling that my heels were not touching the ground because I have to get the pass signed from the Chinese. After I while, I thought to myself, I have got to this point and it is like I am already dead. If they [Chinese] hadn't received some messages [about me], there would not be a problem for me so I entered the office right away. There was an amazing youngster like a flower with many stars on his shoulders. He just looked at me and spoke Tibetan, "Teacher [tib. rgan la] [a polite term of address]. Where are you going? I said, "I am staying in Kalimpong and some time ago I sent a lot of loads to Phari [tib. phag ri], but I haven't hear anything about whether it has reached Lhasa or not. So I am going there to check what happened. If they have sent the loads [to Lhasa] from Phari, I

am coming back. If they haven't send the loads, I am going to Phari and send the loads to Lhasa and then I am coming back." Then he stood up and said, "When I hear your dialect, I was thinking that you are from Litang, right." And then he shook hands with me. When I looked outside, there wasn't anybody except some servants and soldiers and I said, "Yes, I am from Litang and I am doing some small trading." I spoke Baba dialect. So I asked him, "Are you from Ba?" He said, "Yes, I am from Ba. We were from the same homeland. The two of us are speaking the same dialect." He signed the pass and told me to go ahead." When I came I had tied my mule over there and I felt a little be frightening. But when he was so friendly, I didn't feel frighten as before. Then I didn't go over the bridge because I thought they might have made some telephone calls so I went through a side road. At that time, I had my pistol in my pouch so I was not afraid.

Then we traveled four days and nights and arrived at Lhasa. When I entered the courtyard of Andrutsang, Jindag was looking from the window and he told some of his servants and the servants came down running and told me, "Abo! [tib. a pho] [the polite way for calling Khambas] you go inside. They took off the saddle and the saddle [bag](#). Then Jindag asked me, "When did you leave Kalimpong?" I said, I traveled 4 days and nights. He said, "You've got to be kidding." I said, "I am serious." Then he said, "What did you come for?" Then I delivered the letter to him and told him that they sent me to deliver this letter. He asked me, "Who sent you to deliver the letter?" I said, "Gyalo Thondub, Shakapba and Khenjung sent me." Then he asked what did they tell you? I said, "They didn't tell me anything. They just told me that I should deliver this letter and sacrifice my life. I said yes and I made up my mind and came to deliver the letter. Then he asked me how I got through and I told him what I mentioned above. Then Jindag was laughing and he said, "You stay here. We have to go in the evening." I said yes, but I was just wondering what he meant. In the evening, he took me to a house near Künsangtse's house [tib. kun bzang rtse].

The house was also near the house of Trijang Rimpoche [tib. khri byang rin po che]. The Kudrak, Khenjung Kelsang Ngawang [tib. skal bzang ngag dbang] was living there. Jindag went to him and delivered the letter. After reading the letter, the Kudrak said, "Well done. Now you have to leave soon." When they [Jindag and the Kudrak] talked to each other, they said [to me], "What kind of preparations do you have there and what are you doing there?" I said, "We have prepared 20-30 young people. Other than that, we haven't done anything." At that time I was asked if I could leave tomorrow. I said, "I can even leave right now if you want." Then they said, "You shouldn't travel on horse back. Just take a gun and

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don't take anything else and travel in a vehicle. Don't let people see your gun, if they see it, then it is finished. Then they wrote a letter and the Kungö told me that I have to go quickly and I should be careful on the way. The situation will not be good here. Jindag also told me to leave. Later, I came to know the content of the letter [I took] was for making war in Tibet. The [depön](#) of the [Trapchi](#) [tib. grwa bzhi] Regiment [answer not finished]

Q

Was that the one who is in Dharamsala?

A

Probably, he is.

Q

Do you mean Tashi Pera [tib. bkra shis dpal rab]?

A

Probably. They made a plan for the [depön](#) to lead the soldiers and for the [Chushigandru](#) to make war in Lhasa. After the war would take place in Lhasa, from here [India] there were about 70 people who would make war from here in Sikkim. Then the [Litang] youngsters will act as the bodyguard of the Dalai Lama and they planned to tell the Dalai Lama, "We are not going to let the Dalai Lama go back to Tibet. We are going to sacrifice our lives." And they planned to take Dalai Lama to [mainland] India.

But when they made the plan to fight in Tibet, some of the leaders [tib. dpon 'go] said that we can't make the war like this and they didn't let people make war. I was sent back directly in a vehicle and I arrived at Markyang. Then I got food in Shigatse and arrived Phari and got a tea there and arrived Sharsingma. When I was climbing the Natö [tib. sna stod] la mountain pass, the Dalai Lama was coming back to Tibet. They couldn't do anything, but a plan was made like this.

After that, I stayed here [Kalimpong]. Among the 20-30 youngsters, most of them were from Litang. We were talking to each other saying that we shouldn't remain like this. Then it was said that we should go to America to study. Then 6-7 people were trained. They were the first batch in which Athar and the late Lotse were there. They knew how to use the wireless completely and studied in America for several months and then 2-3 of them were air dropped in Litang and they also air-dropped people in the North and

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Jagra Pembar [tib. lcags ra dpal 'bar]. They gave them expenses and weapons and they sacrificed their lives.

Athar and Lotse went back once and the [Chushigandru](#) came out [from Lhasa] in the 6th month of 1958. The two of them stayed in the rocky mountains and they talked through the wireless and delivered the message to the soldiers. After that, the two of them came here. At that time, there was another person from Litang who also got trained. All of the sons of his family came out as heroes in the past. He was probably called Bugö [tib. bu rgod]. Three of them [Athar, Lotse and Bugö] stayed in Kalimpong and they fed two horses and one mule in Kalimpong like feeding pigs to be used for going to Tibet.

At that time, the Chinese knew about that. When they [three of them] crossed the Natö La mountain pass and when they got on the bridge and went in the Chinese office [going back to Tibet], Athar was very smart and he told Bugö stay with the horses and the mule and the two of them went inside to get the pass. At that time, the Chinese attitude had changed and they had mounted bren-guns everywhere. Then they saw there were soldiers coming down from the other side of the bridge where the Trojikhang [tib. gro spyi khang], the place the Governor of [Yadong](#) used to stay, was located.

At that point, Athar said, "It turned out [the situation] is not going to be good. Let's run away." They took out their guns and ran away. The two of them rode the horses and Bugö rode the mule. When they ran away through the gorge of the Trojikhang, the two of them could escape to Sikkim but Bugö's mule couldn't gallop fast and the saddle fell off and Bugö was shot and wounded. He came to an old woman and told the old woman, "This will be useful for you as I have been shot 2-3 times, so I am going to die." And he gave the woman this much hundred [sang](#) notes and a gold amulet. Then the soldiers followed and shot him and dragged his corpse away. Later, the old woman told about this and she was still crying when she told about this.

After that, I am grateful to the government [in exile] because they gave me a job. The government told me that they would send me to America if I wanted. I also thought of going to America and at that time, people who were in America sent me a letter that said, "Don't come to America. They are throwing people from the sky. It is like throwing stones from the sky and people are disappearing." So I said I am not going to America and I am going to stay in Kalimpong. The government said, "In the future, we will treat you nicely. We won't leave you like this." My master, Jindag was killed in our homeland. His name was Tsewang Dorje [tib. tshe dbang rdo rje]. This is his photo.

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Q

Did he go to America?

A

Yes, he was one of the first and the main person. So I thought if I would go there, I will die. I said that I am going to stay here and work hard. Among the airdropped people many of them died like Tsewang Dorje and Ringdzin [tib. rig 'dzin], [Droma](#) Golo, Phüchung [tib. phul byung], and Geleg [tib. dge legs]. 23 youngsters all from Litang died. Only Athar and Lotse were left.

Q

Later, Lotse also died, right?

A

Yes, most of them died in [Tö](#) [tib. stod] when they were airdropped. This is all what I know. Though I didn't experience some events, I have told you whatever I heard from the elderly. Now, Tibet has become kind in declined. It has been 31 years since I served the Tibetan people. I had been working hard since I escaped. They set up an Association called the Solidarity Association (tib. chigdri [tsogpa](#) [tib. chig sgril tshogs pa]) and said that they are going to do great things and they set up a factory for weaving rugs and woolen materials and carpentry and shoe making. There were 85 working on that. I was told to be the steward and I worked as a steward for 6 years. I got 25 Rs per day as salary. They supplied the food, which was not that good because it was food for the refugees, but the factory became good and 30-40 youngsters were able to learn carpet weaving, carpentry, wood carving, and shoe making. After that, the Tibetan Government merged the factory with the factory in Shimla, saying it would easy to get the relief support.